

Application No. 10/645,160

Reply to Office Action

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the above-identified application is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Status of the Application

Claims 2-20, 22-41 and 43-56 are currently pending in the application. Of these claims: claim 1 is canceled without prejudice; claims 2, 3 and 7 are amended in a manner which renders them independent, while incorporating therein the substance of canceled claim 1; claims 5 and 6 are amended to be dependent on claim 2; claim 20 is amended to be dependent on claim 43; claim 41 is amended to be dependent on claim 48; claims 44 and 49 are amended to incorporate the substance of claims 15 and 16 therein, respectively; new claims 53 and 54 depend from claim 3 and incorporate therein the substance of original claims 5 and 6, respectively; and new claims 55 and 56 depend from claim 7, and incorporate therein the substance of original claims 5 and 6, respectively. A number of other claims are also amended to address non-substantive grammatical matters.

Support for the newly presently claims may be found throughout the specification, as well as in, e.g., claims 3, 5, 6 and 7 as originally filed. No new matter has been added by way of these amendments.

Summary of the Office Action

Claims 1, 5 and 6 are rejected as anticipated by, or alternatively as obvious over, U.S. Patent 5,447,824 to Mutsaers et al. These claims are also rejected as anticipated by, or alternatively as obvious over, PCT Publication 98/54767.

Claims 20, 41, 44 and 49 are rejected under the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. § 112 as being indefinite. Specifically, claims 20, 41, 44 and 49 are said to be inconsistent with their parent claims.

Claims 2-4 and 7 are objected to as depending on a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if written in proper independent form.

Claims 8-19, 22-40, 43, 45-48 and 50-52 are allowed.

Comments on the Rejections

Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

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Applicants respectfully request entry of the amendments set forth herein despite the fact that the application is under a final rejection because the amendments are formal in nature, and are intended to place the application in condition for allowance.

For example, the substantive rejections are addressed by canceling claim 1 without prejudice, and by amending claims 5 and 6 to be dependent on claims describing allowable subject matter. Moreover, the non-substantive rejections are addressed by introducing language, supported by the specification and claims as filed, into the claims, or by changing their respective dependencies. No new matter has been introduced into any of the amendment claims, and no further consideration of the amended claims on the merits is required.

Conclusion

The application is considered in good and proper form for allowance, and the Examiner is respectfully requested to pass this application to issue. If, in the opinion of the Examiner, a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of the subject application, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney.

Respectfully submitted,



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Date: September 7, 2005